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## **EXHIBIT G**

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UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT					
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA					
	-	-			
In Re:		: 09-80795 :			
MAHALO ENERGY (USA), INC	1 /	: : Tulsa, Oklahoma			
_		: : June 9, 2009			
	)ebtor. 	: {			
		EARING REGARDING			
ISSUANCE OF BENCH RULING ON MOTIONS BEFORE THE HONORABLE TERRENCE L. MICHAEL					
UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE					
APPEARANCES:					
For the Debtor:	G. DAVID BRYANT, ESQ.				
	Kline, K	W. ELLIOTT, ESQ. Gline, Elliott & E, P.C.			
	720 NE 6	3rd Street City, Oklahoma 73105			
For Ableco Finance, LLC:		KUTMAS, ESQ.			
	GARY M.	McDONALD, ESQ. Saunders, Daniel &			
	Anders	son, LLP Soston - Suite 500			
		oklahoma 74103			
For the Unsecured Creditors Committee:		). BABICH, ESQ.			
Credicora Committee:	2001 Ros	McKenzie s Avenue			
		mmell Crow Center Texas 75201			
For Vectra CBM, LLC:		CRAIGE, ESQ.			
	3501 Sou	Saffa, Craige, P.C. th Yale Avenue			
	ruisa, C	oklahoma 74135			
	(Appearan	ce continued on next page			

1	UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT			2
2	NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA			
3	APPEARANCES CONTINU	ED:		
4	For Wells Fargo		I E. HOWLAND, ESQ.	
5	Foothill, LLC:	525	enstein, Fist & Ringold South Main, Suite 700	
6		Tul	sa, Oklahoma 74103	
7	For Savanna Energy		ALENA ROBERTS, ESQ.	
8	Services Corp.:	Ne	as, Books, Brown and elson, P.C.	
9			N. Robinson - Suite 1300 ahoma City, Oklahoma 73102	
10	For Rose Resources,		IN P. DOYLE, ESQ.	
11		Wil:	y, Walker, Jackman, Liamson & Marlar, P.C. Fifth Street, Suite 900	
12			sa, Oklahoma 74103	
13	For Williams Product Mid-Continent, LLC,		VEN W. SOULE, ESQ. IT. RICHER, ESQ.	
14	and Penn Virginia N	C Hali	l, Estill, Hardwick, Gable, den & Nelson, P.C.	
15	Operating Company, LLC:		320 S. Boston Avenue, Suite 200 Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103	
16	For Baker Hughes Oi	lfield HOL	Y HAMM, ESQ.	
17	Operations, Inc.:		v, Fogel, Spence, LLP Allen Parkway, Suite 4100	
18			ston, Texas 77019	
19	For Wells Fargo Foothill, LLC:		RENCE V. GELBER, ESQ. ılte, Roth & Zabel, LLP	
20	,	919	Third Avenue York, New York 10022	
21	Special Counsel for		HUA WELLS, ESQ.	
22			000 WILLEY LOX.	
23		(Anne	earances continue on next page	)
24		(1100)		• /
25				

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1		STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT	3
2	NORTH.	ERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA	
3	APPEARANCES CONTINUED"		
4	For the U.S. Trustee:	KATHERINE VANCE, ESQ. Office of the U.S. Trustee 224 South Boulder - Suite 2	٦٢
5 6		Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103	25
7	Court Transcriber:	RUTH ANN HAGER TypeWrite Word Processing S	ervice
8 9		211 N. Milton Road Saratoga Springs, New York	
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    (Proceedings began at 2:01 p.m.)
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              THE COURT: -- USA, Inc., debtor. It's a Chapter 11
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          We're here today for the Court to issue its bench ruling
    on the motion to use cash collateral and the motion regarding
 4
    the sale procedures.
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              Could I have appearances for the record, please?
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 7
              MR. BRYANT: Your Honor, for the debtor David Bryant,
    Steve Elliott, Mark Monson [Ph.].
 8
              MR. KUTMAS: For Ableco, Your Honor, Chad Kutmas and
 9
    Gary McDonald and possibly Paul Moak is on the line.
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11
              MR. MOAK: Yes. Paul Moak is also here.
12
              MS. BABICH: Your Honor, Laurie Babich for the
    Unsecured Creditors' Committee.
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14
              MR. CRAIGE: Your Honor, Mark Craige for Vectra CBM,
15
    LLC, and also my client's principals, Paul Heinz [Ph.] and
    Kevin Herringer [Ph.] are listening in but have been instructed
16
17
    to be silent unless otherwise directed to speak.
18
              MR. HOWLAND: Your Honor, John Howland for Wells
    Fargo Foothill.
19
              MS. ROBERTS: Your Honor, Karalena [Ph.] Roberts for
20
21
    Savannah Drilling and Trailblazer Drilling.
22
              MR. DOYLE: Kevin Doyle, Rose Resources and my
23
    client, Ben Stanley [Ph.] is also listening in.
24
              MR. SOULE: Your Honor, Steve Soule for the Williams
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    entities and also for the Penn Virginia entities, and John
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   Richer is also on a different line from mine which may be
 1
    listening in. Thank you.
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              MS. HAMM: Your Honor, Holly Hamm on behalf of Baker
 4
   Hughes Oilfield [inaudible].
 5
              MR. GELBER: Your Honor, Lawrence Gelber of Schulte,
   Roth & Zabel on behalf of Wells Fargo Foothill.
 6
 7
              MR. WELLS: Your Honor, Joshua Wells [Ph.] as special
   counsel for the UCC [Ph.].
 8
 9
              THE COURT: Are there any other appearances?
   United States Trustee is not on the call? Just a moment,
10
11
   please.
12
                      [Pause in the proceedings.]
13
              THE COURT: I apologize for the delay.
14
                      [Pause in the proceedings.]
15
              THE COURT: Just a moment. We're waiting on the
16
    United States Trustee to join the call.
17
                      [Pause in the proceedings.]
18
              THE COURT: Has the United States Trustee joined this
19
   call?
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              Whoever is speaking, just so you know, the microphone
    is picking you up perfectly.
21
22
                      [Pause in the proceedings.]
23
              THE COURT: We're going to go -- stay on the line
24
    everyone but we are going to go off the record for just a
25
    second. Hold on.
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б 1 [Off the record.] 2 THE COURT: We are back on the record in case number 09-80795, Mahalo Energy (USA), Inc. It is my understanding a 3 party has joined the call. Is that correct? If so, would that 4 5 party please make an appearance? 6 MS. VANCE: Your Honor, Katherine Vance for the United States Trustee. 7 THE COURT: Thank you. 8 9 Counsel, let me start with a little background as to 10 how this process works. When I issue bench rulings of this nature, what I do is read my findings and conclusions into the 11 12 record. Those findings and conclusions are being transcribed 13 as we speak. An audio compact disk would be available, I 14 believe, yet today at the conclusion of the hearing and parties 15 can order transcripts. 16 Obviously, you are welcome to and I invite you to 17 take notes. I would advise the parties that I issue rulings using a speaking outline and my speaking outline this afternoon 18 19 is 27 pages long, so note-taking might become a bit tedious. 20 Presently before the Court are the following motions: The motion to use cash collateral, motion for authority to 21 obtain credit under Section 364(b) and Rule 4001(c), the 22 23 financing motion filed by the debtor; also are -- before the 24 Court is the motion to assume lease or executory contract under Section 365; motion for sale of property under Section 363(b); 25

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7 motion to sell property free and clear of liens of 1 2 substantially all property of the estate, which in effect I 3 will refer to as the sale procedures motion. Each of these motions has drawn various and sundry objections. 4 5 evidentiary hearing was held on the motions on June 8, 2002 --2009. The evidence was received and argument made. 6 7 The following findings of fact and conclusions of law are made pursuant to Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 7052, 8 9 which is made applicable to this contested matter by Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 9014. 10 11 The Court makes the following findings regarding its 12 jurisdiction. The Court finds that is has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 United States Code Section 1334(b). 13 The Court finds -- further finds that reference to the Court of 14 15 this bankruptcy case is proper pursuant to 28 United States 16 Code Section 157(a). The Court finds that the issues raised in 17 the financing motion and the sale procedures motion constitute 18 core proceedings as that term is defined under 28 United States 19 Code Section 157(b)(2)(A)(M) and (N). 20 The Court further finds that this case has been referred to this Court by general order of the United States 21 22 District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma. On that 23 basis the Court concludes that it has jurisdiction and

authority to enter its findings of fact, conclusions of law and

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judgment.

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The Court makes the following findings of fact.

Mahalo Energy (USA) filed an original petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code with this court on May 21, 2009, some 19 days ago. It continues in control of its assets as a debtor-in-possession. Its primary business is the acquisition of, exploration for, and development and production of coal bed methane and shale gas in Hughes, Le Flore, Okfuskee, McIntosh and Pittsburg Counties in the State of Oklahoma. The debtor owns interest in approximately 300 producing gas wells and leases over 60,000 net acres of coal bed methane and shale gas prospective lands.

The debtor is wholly owned by Mahalo Energy, Limited, an Alberta corporation that has presently filed for creditor protection under Canadian law, which was described at the evidentiary hearing as roughly the equivalent of a Chapter 11 bankruptcy case in the United States. Management of the debtor consists of six officers and employees in the country of Canada, as well as staff in Tulsa and field operators. The staff is well compensated. Turning to the Canadian staff, there are six employees. The president and chief executive officer, Mr. Burns [Ph.] who testified in court, is paid \$170,000.00 per year in Canadian dollars. The Chief Operating Officer is paid \$185,000.00 per year in Canadian dollars.

There are four other Canada employees, two accountants and two engineers who are paid a total of 450 -- and the administrator,

9 which I believe I have already included, paid a total of 1 \$450,000.00 per year. Total salary is approximately 2 \$805,000.00 per year Canadian or \$722,350.00 in U.S. dollars. 3 In Tulsa the debtor employs four accountants and two 4 land men [Ph.] who are paid a total of \$490,000.00 per year. 5 There's also a Canadian ex patriate consultant, is how the 6 7 person was described yesterday, working in the Tulsa office. 8 That person's salary was unclear but when I get to and begin to 9 discuss the budget that person is paid under a separate line 10 item in the budget. Total administrative compensation for the 11 debtor's professional -- or debtor's employees and officers, 12 not including outside professionals or consultants or field 13 people, totals approximately \$1,212,350.00 per year or 14 \$101,000.00 per month. 15 Creditors of the debtor include the following: Ableco, which in various of the documents that are at issue 16 17 today is described as an administrative agent and lender, and 18 Wells Fargo Foothill, LLC, described as a processing agent and 19 lender. Throughout most of the hearing today I will 20 collectively refer to the credit -- this creditor and the debt 21 as Ableco. They hold a claim in the approximate amount of 73 22 million dollars and claim a first lien position on virtually 23 all of the debtor's assets. Ableco is also the proposed lender under the proposed debtor-in-possession financing arrangement. 24 25 Historically, the evidence before the Court indicates

that as of June 30, 2008 the debt at issue was 64 million dollars and was owed to Union Bank of California. That debt was then acquired by Ableco. Under the terms of the acquisition and subsequent financing the debtor was to meet certain performance or -- criteria or have a sale arrangement of its property by March 31, 2009 or would be assessed an additional fee under the contractual arrangement with Ableco of ten million dollars. The criteria was not met and the fee was assessed.

In addition, the debtor states that it has trade payables of approximately 12.5 million dollars and the debtor also lists a debt to its parent corporation, Mahalo Energy Limited, of 22 million dollars. The nature of this debt is somewhat unclear. James Burns, who is both the president of the debtor and of Mahalo Energy Limited, testified that this is inner-company debt and is in the nature of an unsecured claim. However, he did admit that no lone documentation exists with respect to this debt.

There are also secured creditors under various joint operating agreements. Pursuant thereto, entities such as Williams Production Mid-Continent Company operate natural gas wells in which the debtor has a working interest. The working interest owner such as the debtor is required to pay its proportionate share of costs, expenses and joint interest billings to entities such as Williams as the operator.

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Creditors such as these have filed liens securing their claims. They have pled the same in their objections and they will be considered secured creditors for the purposes of this ruling.

Now turn to a brief discussion of the prepetition financial history of the debtor. Prior to October of 2008 the debtor engaged in an aggressive drilling program for gas based upon expectations that prices for the commodity would remain strong or grow stronger. The economy did not perform as hoped for and the debtor defaulted upon its various loan obligations to Ableco. In November of 2008 Ableco began sweeping the accounts of debtor at the Union Bank of California and applying all swept funds to its indebtedness. Swept funds may have included funds held by debtor in trust for others. Under its working arrangement with Ableco the debtor would make requests for -- of Ableco for draws in order to pay expenses. Ableco would then decide how much to advance to the debtor in its sole discretion.

Prior to the filing of the bankruptcy case the debtor repay -- retained GMP Securities, LP, where I will refer to "GMP", as an advisor to sell its assets as a going concern. The sale of the business was advertised. The data room was set up in order to allow prospective buyers to con -- conduct due diligence. Solicitations were sent to approximately 220 prospective buyers. GMP spoke to 140 of them. Thirteen of them signed confidentiality agreements in order to obtain

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. 12

2 looked at the data and five made bids or sale proposals as a

access to the information contained in the data room. Twelve

3 result of this process. Three of those were cash bids in the

4 range of 45 million dollars. One proposed offer required

5 | financing that never materialized and the other involved a

6 | merger with another insolvent company and was rejected. As a

7 result no sale took place or other debtor's assets took place

8 prior to the filing of this bankruptcy case.

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In looking at the value of the debtor's assets at this point in time based upon the record before the Court, any such determination is problematic at best. The debtor engaged in a concerted effort to sell its assets as a going concern prior to the filing in this case. That procedure generated a high bid of 45 million dollars. The evidence before the Court was offer -- the evidence before the Court was offered yesterday to the effect that after that process was concluded or at least outside of that process the debtor received another cash offering in the range of 60 million dollars. The information about this bid was sketchy and the one thing that was clear is that this bid did not originate from the prepetition sale process. The Court will consider 60 million dollars as a maximum valuation of debtor's assets for the purposes of today's ruling.

Following the filing of the bankruptcy case the debtor in order to continue operations made efforts to obtain

13 post-petition financing. Debtor, through its consultants 1 2 Alvarez and Marsal, who I will refer to as "A&M," sought 3 debtor-in-possession financing, or DIP financing, from four 4 sources: D. E. Shaw [Ph.], Fortress, Silverpoint [Ph.] and 5 Natural Gas Partners. To put it simply, there were no takers. The debtor was unable to obtain any unsecured credit even if it 6 7 were grant such credit super-priority status. 8 Mr. Dean Swick, the director at A&M that is working 9 directly with the debtor, stating that as a result of his 10 efforts the financing agreement or the proposed financing that will be later discussed was agreed to and negotiated between 11 12 the debtor and Ableco. In his experience the financial terms 13 of that financing are favorable within the marketplace. 14 Mr. Swick's testimony led the Court to believe that Mr. Swick was not involved in the negotiation of many of the nonfinancial 15 terms of the proposed financing. That proposed financing may 16 17 be described as follows: It involves not only financing but the use of cash collateral. The parties to the agreement are 18 19 Mahalo Energy (USA), our debtor-in-possession, Ableco Finance, 20 LLC, who I have referred to as "Ableco," and Mahalo Energy 21 Limited, the parent company of the debtor. 22 The loan particulars are as follows. The amount of 23 the loan is two million dollars. The proposed financing 24 arrangement requires that debtor draw down the entire two

million dollars upon approval of the motion. There's a

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\$40,000.00 origination fee.

Proceeds of the loan are to be used, among other things, to pay all of Ableco's fees and expenses incurred in connection with the making of the loan. The term of the loan is brief. The term is 18 days if a final financing order is not entered, three months after financing -- or after a final financing order is entered, and last prior to that date there is a sale of all assets to the debtor or if there is somewhere in the loan documents an earlier date as may be prescribed in those documents. For the record, those documents are voluminous.

The interest rate under the term of the loan is variable with a floor of either 16 or 16.5 percent. It is equal -- according to Mr. Swick, it is equal to the rate charged by Ableco in its last traunch of financing provided to the debtor prior to the case filing.

The collateral for the DIP loan is all of the debtor's assets. This lien to be granted is a priming lien and is to be given priority over all prepetition secured claims. In addition, Ableco is to receive a super priority claim superior to all other super priority claims except the United States Trustee fees and a \$250,000.00 professional fee carveout. This super priority is to trump all claims that may ever arise in this case under Section 726 of the Code, including claims for a Chapter 7 trustee fees and expenses in the event

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of conversion. No other super priority claims may be granted absent the agreement of the lender.

The Court notes that although counsel for Ableco stated at the hearing that the super priority exists only as to the two million-dollar advance, not as to any prepetition debt, the Court having read Section 10(a) of the proposed order finds that the order is a bit unclear in that regard. It could be argued that it — that the order as drafted, and I'm talking about the order that was submitted earlier today and I have read that order for the record, arguably grants a super priority administrative expense claim securing all of Ableco's prepetition indebtedness. I'm simply saying it's unclear in that regard. I note that that provision is found in page 8 of a 37-page order.

The proposed financing also involves the use of cash collateral. According to the budget offered and received into evidence the cash collateral use is for the period from June 12, 2009 through August 7, 2009, or approximately two months for several of the items in the budget merit discussion. Included in the budget is \$422,524.00 to Mahalo Energy Limited for management and overhead services. This is roughly \$211,000.00 per month. This number is hard squared with the historical cost of the Tulsa and Canadian administrative employees. The Court notes that none of these corporate officers appear to have taken any reduction in salary since the

filing of the case. What makes this number even harder to understand is the fact that, according to the testimony of Mr. Burns, the category management and overhead fee in the budget referred only to the admin -- payment of the salaries of the administrative employees in Canada, which should total significantly less than this amount. If the Court's calculations and dollar conversion is correct, it should total about \$60,200.00 per month.

Also included in the budget was \$902,500.00 in professional fees. Those fees are to be paid among others to the debtor's U.S. counsel. Mr. Burns testified that some of those fees are also to be paid to Canadian counsel. The identity of those counsel, the scope of services performed, and how any Canadian counsel fit into this case is presently unknown to the Court. It involves payment of fees to GMP, payment of fees to counsel for the unsecured Creditors

Committee, payment of the statutory fees owed to the United States Trustee, and counsel fees owed to Ableco. The budget also calls for \$104,000.00 to be paid in retention bonuses, which according to Mr. Burns are necessary for Mahalo -- for the debtor to retain key personnel.

The budget provides for payment of \$28,307.00 in severance pay. According to Mr. Burns this is simply an effort by the debtor to, and I quote, "Do the right thing" as employees are let go. Mr. Burns admits there is no contractual

obligation of the debtor to make such payments.

The budget contains a provision for \$95,607.00 in other expenses. None of these expenses was explained or justified in any significant detail beyond the statement of Mr. Burns as current management of the debtor that they are necessary. In addition, the budget provides for adequate protection payments, payment of post-petition interest on the prepetition claims of Ableco totaling \$1,764,451.00 between now and August 7, 2009. According to Mr. Swick, the debtor agreed to pay this post-petition interest because Ableco demanded it and the debtor had no other financing options. According to Mr. Swick, were debtor not to pay these sums the debtor's cash flow would allow it to operate without borrowing until at least July 3, 2009 using cash collateral.

The Court notes that with respect to this payment of -- this \$1,764,000.00 payment, the initial proposed financing order expressly described those payments as payments of post-petition interest on prepetition debt. So the record is clear, let me state that at the time the financing motion was originally filed submitted to the Court was a proposed interim order, which has not been entered but it was submitted to the Court for review. Earlier today a proposed final order and a redline copy of the order showing the changes between the two was submitted to the Court. Parenthetically, I would like to express my appreciation to the parties for submission of the

redline copies. That greatly assisted the Court and I am grateful.

The order entered today reflects the statements made by counsel for Ableco at yesterday's hearing that the issue of whether the entitlement to post-petition interest on a prepetition debt need not be addressed by the Court, that instead the Court could treat the payments as partial payment of Ableco's petition claim -- prepetition claim and determine later whether the sum should be applied to principal or interest. In addition, there was other adequate protection offered for the use of cash collateral. The placement liens and all collateral equal -- in an amount equal to the diminution and value of the collateral and yet another superpriority claim. The Court also notes and I admitted -- I apologize, I omitted this earlier, but the budget also provides for \$55,000.00 to be paid in post-petition interest charges under the DIP financing.

There has been no offer of adequate protection made to any other party that may have an interest in any property of the debtor. Other creditors have claimed to have a first lien on certain of the debtor's assets. Those creditors include:

Williams Production Mid-Continent Company, who I will hereafter refer to as "Williams"; Baker Hughes Oilfield Operations,
Incorporated, "Baker Hughes"; Savanna Energy Services

Corporation and Trailblazer Drilling Corporation, "Savanna";

and Penn Virginia Oil and Gas Corporation, "Penn." The nature, extent and priority of those liens has not been determined --pardon me -- given the expedited nature of these hearings. No one has disputed their existence or at least their potential existence for the purposes of these hearings and the Court will presume that such a security interest exists for the purposes of today's ruling. Such presumption is only for the purpose of this ruling and the nature, extent and priority of those liens is expressly subject to future determination if necessary.

There are other provisions in the proposed financing order that merit mentioning at this point. Under the terms of the proposed agreement and order the debtor waives the right to seek use of cash collateral or post-petition lending on any other terms or from any other entity. The debtor, and I quote, "broadly indemnifies each lender, their agents and each of their affiliates, partners, directors, officers, employees, agents and advisors."

The waiver of the right to use cash collateral or obtain post-petition financing effectively precludes any route for this case other than the proposed sale of assets. In the event of default Ableco is authorized to enter into any leased premises to receive its collateral without notice to any landlord and regardless of the contractual relationship between the debtor as lessee and any such landlord as lessor. None of Ableco's collateral may ever be surcharged for any reason under

Section 506(c) of the Bankruptcy Code. Under the terms of the proposed financing debtor, and I quote: "hereby forever waives and releases any and all claims as defined in the Bankruptcy Code, counterclaims, causes of actions, defenses or setoff rights against the prepetition agent and the prepetition lenders," which are Ableco and Wells Fargo, whether arising at law or in equity, including the recharacterization, subordination, avoidance or other claim arising under or pursuant to Section 105 or Chapter 5 of the Bankruptcy Code or under any other similar provisions of applicable state or federal law." That's found in Sect -- or paragraph 11(i) at page 14 of the proposed financing order.

Provision is -- this provision is especially troubling given the allegations that some of the funds collected by Ableco and applied to its indebtedness may have been held in trust by the debtor for its operators or those entitled to royalties. The proposed order gives all other parties in the case 45 days from the petition date to review and object to the prepetition claims of the lender, postpetition claims of the post-petition lenders or forever hold their peace. Moreover, if no objection is timely filed, all parties are bound by the stipulations of the debtor regarding the validity of those creditors' positions. That provision is binding upon any Chapter 7 trustee subsequently appointed in this case in the event the case were to be converted.

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automatic stay is lifted, the right to use cash collateral is terminated and the lender can immediately enforce all remedies including the rights of setoff. Upon the issuance of a final order approving the financing arrangement, Ableco has a lien upon all Chapter 5 claims the debtor may have against any parties to secure both pre- and post-petition indebtedness. This financing arrangement may be modified by the debtor and the letter -- lender without court approval upon five days' notice to the unsecured Creditors' Committee and the United States Trustee. While the debtor agrees to pay all of Ableco's expenses incurred as a result of the post-petition financing from estate funds, none of the expenses are subject to review by any party or the Court. The Court also notes that, at least under the terms of the proposed financing order, the entire financing arrangement is off if the financing order is not entered within 18 days of the date of the filing of the petition. Obviously that date has come and gone.

Upon the occurrence of the event of default the

Under the terms of the pre -- the order of the Court is -- this Court is to retain jurisdiction in order to enforce the security interest granted to Ableco under the debtor-in-possession loan. I note parenthetically, this may just be selfish on my part, but in this Court's opinion the Bankruptcy Court is not a place to file foreclosures or replevins or suits on notes. Those belong in state court or, if diversity exists,

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perhaps in federal district court but so the parties know, as they proceed the Court would not agree to the entry of such a provision.

Let us now turn to the sales procedure motion. On May 21, 2009, the petition date, the debtor entered an asset purchase agreement, which I will refer to as the "CME agreement" or "stalking horse agreement" with an affiliate of Ableco called CME Asset Holdings, which I will refer to as "CME" or the "stalking horse." Under the terms of the CME agreement, CME agrees to buy all of the debtor's assets. The terms of the sale are that (1) CME will be allowed to credit bid the debt owed to Ableco. That bid is to be in the amount I believe of 63 million dollars. My belief as to that number is based upon testimony of the June 8, 2009 hearing. The sale agreement is a bit cryptic as to the amount of the bid.

In addition to the credit bid, there is to be a cash payment of \$350,000.00 and CME will pay an amount required under Section 365(b)(1) of the United States Bankruptcy Code to assume the executory contracts and unexpired leases to be assigned to CME subject to limitations on the cure cost in the agreement and CME reserves the right to reject any contracts or releases. The sale is subject to higher and better offers under the bidding procedures that have been proposed.

What is being sought today is not approval of that sale but approval of a bidding procedure process, specifically

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the relief requested is as follows: The authorizing and scheduling of an auction at which the debtor will solicit higher and better offers in connection with the sale of substantially all set -- assets of the estate; the establishment of a bid deadline; scheduling of an auction to occur within approximately 30 days after entry of the bidding procedures order; approving the bidding procedures for such assets; approving the form and scope of the notice of the bidding procedures at auction, and I note parenthetically that ori -- at least originally the bidding procedures order under the terms of the parties' agreement had to be entered on or before 18 days after the petition date, and again that date has come and gone. Under the terms of the agreement the debtor reserves the right to modify the bid procedures as set forth in the order without further notice to the Court or the Court's approval. I direct the parties to the bidding procedures found at Docket 23-1 at page 17.

The Court has asked to schedule a sale hearing in order to approve the sale to the winning bidder. The Court has asked to waive any ten-day stay of the order authorizing sale as provided in Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 6004(h). After conclusion of the sale the Court has asked to approve the sale of the assets free and clear of all liens, claims and encumbrances which is allowed under Section 363(f) of the Code if effective lien holders consent. The debtor asks the Court

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to treat any failure to object as the equivalent of consent to 2 the sale. Debtor asks that the Court protect the purchaser as

a good faith purchaser under Section 363(m) of the Code, 3

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including the stalking horse bidder. The effect of this would 4

5 be that reverse rule or modification on appeal could not effect

6 the validity of the sale. As I noted, the debtor wants the

7 stalking horse to be clare -- to be declared a good-faith

8 purchaser by the Court before the fact of any appeal or

9 modification. The motion states that the arm's-length nature

10 of the transaction will be demonstrated at the sale.

The debtor wants the procedure for assumption in executory contracts and leases as set forth in the sale agreement approved, the form and scope of notice of assumption and assignment approved, and with respect to the assumption and assignment the waiver of any ten-day stay of an order authorizing the assignment as provided in Rule 6000(d).

The debtor seeks approval of a \$10,000.00 breakup fee to the stalking horse bidder in the event there is a higher bidder and also seeks approval of the expenses incurred by the stalking horse bidder. Those expenses are to be approved without Court review and to the extent they are for any reason unpaid they are to -- all of the breakup fee and the expenses are entitled to administrative priority under Sections 4.5 and 7.2 on the stalking horse agreement. Those are my basic findings of fact.

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As I am sure the parties can appreciate in a bench ruling of this nature, it is possible if not likely that additional findings of fact will inadvertently be misplaced in my conclusions of law. Any such misplaced findings of fact are incorporated into the Court's findings of fact by this reference. As the Court reviews both the financing motion and the sales procedure motion, it finds the following statements of Judge Marlar of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Arizona applicable to the facts of this case and I quote:

"Debtors in possession generally enjoy little negotiating power with the proposed lender, particularly when the lender has a prepetition lien on cash collateral and other assets. As a result, lenders often exact terms that are favorable to them but that harm the estate and all other creditors."

Judge Mahler cites two cases, <u>In the Matter of: Ames [Ph.]</u>

<u>Department Stores, Inc.</u>, 115 Bankruptcy Reporter, page 34 at page 38, a 1990 decision of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York; in a case entitled <u>In Re: Tenney</u>, T-E-N-N-E-Y, <u>Village Company</u>, 104 Bankruptcy Reporter 562 at pages 567-570, a 1989 decision of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Hampshire.

Judge Marlar goes on to state and I continue the quote:

"While certain favorable financing terms may be permitted as a reasonable exercise of the debtor's business judgment, Bankruptcy Courts do not allow terms in financing arrangements which convert the bankruptcy process from one design to benefit all creditors to one design for the unwarranted benefit of a post-petition lender."

Citing the same cases again.

"Thus, Courts look to whether the proposed terms would prejudice the powers and rights that the Code confers for the benefit of all creditors, thereby leveraging the Chapter 11 process by granting a lender excessive control over the debtor or its assets with the prejudice of other parties in interest."

Again, citing the Ames and Tenney cases.

"The Bankruptcy Court cannot under the guise of Section 364 approve financing arrangements that amount to a plan of reorganization but of eight confirmation requirements."

Citing a case in the matter entitled <u>In the Matter of Chevy</u>

<u>Devco</u>, C-H-E-V-Y, D-E-V-C-O, 78 Bankruptcy Reporter 585 at pages 589 and 590, a 1987 decision of the 19 -- of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California.

Judge Marlar's decision is found in a case entitled <a href="In the Matter of Berry">In the Matter of Berry</a>, B-E-R-R-Y, Good, G-O-O-D, LLC, 400 <a href="Bankruptcy">Bankruptcy</a> Reporter 741 at page 747, a 2008 decision from the

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Bankruptcy Court for the District of Arizona. I will hereafter refer to that case as I cite it in the future as the <u>Berry Good</u> case.

The financing motion is brought by the debtor under Section 364(d) of the Bankruptcy Code, which provides that and I quote:

"The Court after notice in a hearing may authorize the obtaining of credit or the incurring of debt secured by a senior or equal lien on property of the estate that is subject to a lien only if the Trustee is unable to obtain such credit otherwise and there is adequate protection of the interest of the holder of the lien on the property of the estate on which that senior or equal lien is proposed to be granted."

Subsection 2 of 364(d) states that:

"In any hearing under this subsection the Trustee has the burden of proof on the issue of adequate protection."

Financing under Section 364(d) of the Code is commonly known as financing through the use of a priming lien because the lien at issue is given superiority to or primes the liens held by present creditors of the debtor. Priming is an extraordinary remedy. Our Court of Appeals has not ruled upon the issue. Two things, however, are clear. If a priming lien is to be granted a debtor must provide adequate protection to the liens being primed and the debtor has the burden of proof

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on the issue of adequate protection. This Court feels that some of the principals that are used in determining whether to authorize credit under Section 364(c) of the Code may be of use here.

The United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Colorado has held that a debtor must prove the following four elements to obtain post-petition financing under that section. They must establish that the proposed financing is an exercise of sound and reasonable business judgment, that no alternative financing is available on any other basis, that the financing is in the best interest of the estate and its creditors, and that no better offers, bids or timely proposals are before the Court. Direct the parties to a decision entitled In the Matter of Western Pacific Airlines, Inc., 223 Bankruptcy Reporter 567, a 1997 decision of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Colorado. The Court will consider the teachings of the Western Pacific case, the requirements of adequate protection under 364(d), and the pronouncements of Judge Marlar in Berry Good as it considers whether to approve the financing motion.

Looking at this matter the Court is satisfied that the debtor is unable to obtain unsecured credit or credit secured by a junior lien on property of the estate. The Court is also satisfied, albeit a bit reluctantly, that as to interest rate and the fact that an initial draw of two million

dollars is required, no better offers of financing are available to the debtor. The motion, however, becomes problematic when it comes to the requirement of adequate protection.

The statute is clear. In order for a priming lien to be authorized there must be adequate protection of those creditors whose lien is being primed. Here we have several creditors who claim liens on prop -- several creditors other than Ableco who claim liens on property of the debtor. While the validity of the liens has not been established through litigation, all of the parties who appeared before the Court and in effect asked the Court to presume that their lien was valid and given the expedited nature of this matter, the Court has chosen to do so. The Court is certainly not in a position to discard any of the claimed liens as invalid. With the exception of Ableco, the debtor has chosen to offer no adequate protection to any of the lien holders who are being primed.

In closing, counsel -- in closing argument, excuse me, counsel for the debtor suggested that there may be equity in the assets of the debtor that are subject to those creditors' liens. The Court is not persuaded that the record contains sufficient detail regarding the alleged equity to protect any of those creditors and rejects the argument. This Court is also not convinced based upon the teachings of <a href="Merry Good">Berry</a> Good that the proposed financing is in the best interest of the

creditors of this estate. The debtor is doing what many a cash-strapped debtor in a Chapter 11 case does, is giving up 2

all of its rights and remedies, indeed even the right to see if 3

any such rights and remedies might exist against its major

5 lender in order to have the cash to live another day.

important to remember here that there was not one scintilla of 6

7 evidence offered by the debtor to the effect that any of the

8 debtor's principals had made any review of the loan

documentation between the debtor and Ableco in order to make a 9

10 determination of the validity of that documentation or that the

debtor had no claims against Ableco. 11

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There was uncontroverted testimony that debtor -- or that Ableco had taken funds held by the debtor in trust and applied them to its debt. The Court has no idea whether anyone was ultimately damaged by this and it makes more -- no determination one way or another at this point in time. certainly possible that Ableco re-advanced any wrongfully taken funds to the debtor and that those funds once re-advanced ultimately reached their proper destination. I have no idea, but the debtor is forfeiting its right to even investigate this and every other issue at the inception of this case.

The debtor has taken the position and argued to the Court that the financing motion and the sales procedure motion are to be taken together. When that is done it seems clear to the Court that sale of the debtor's assets by motion is the

primary objective of both Ableco and the debtor, that the sale occurs as debtor and Ableco hope. Regardless of whether the sale is to a third-party cash bidder or to the stalking horse, it is almost certain that this case will not proceed to a plan and disclosure statement for there will be nothing to reorganize. Indeed, reorganization is not the goal here; proposed sale appears to be a substitute for a plan.

It also appears to the Court that the structure of this case in its present posture is likely to benefit no one except Ableco. Months of prepetition attempts to sell this debtor were fruitless. The only thing that has changed is that the debtor is now in Chapter 11. There is no testimony upon which the Court could base a reasonable belief that a white knight stands somewhere on the horizon ready to rescue this debtor and its creditors.

The deadlines proposed by Ableco in the financing and sale procedures motions have the effect of forcing this case to operate at light speed. Parties who have never seen any of the loan documents in this case have 45 days to review those documents and make whatever claims they may have. The Court notes that the normal statute of limitations for such actions under Chapter 5 of the Bankruptcy Code is two years.

Ableco has a de facto veto power over any actions taken by the debtor that are not in direct accord with the wishes of Ableco. It has an absolute right to cancel the

32 proposed sale. If the debtor takes any action outside the 1 prepi -- the prescribed course of sale, Ableco can in effect pull the plug. Looking at the use of cash collateral, it is 3 inextricably intertwined with the debtor-in-possession 4 5 financing. The debtor only seeks to use cash collateral upon the terms set forth in the financing motion. The Court 6 7 concludes that several of the terms contained in the cash collateral agreement prejudice the powers and rights of the 8 Code -- that the Code confers for the benefit of all creditors, thereby leveraging the Chapter 11 process by granting a lender 10 excessive control over the debtor or its assets to the 11 12 prejudice of other parties in interest, quoting Berry Good 13 again, 400 Bankruptcy Reporter at 747. 14 These have all previously been mentioned in a ruling 15 and include the payment of post-petition interest on the prepetition claim. As a general rule, under-secured creditors 16 17 are not entitled to pre-confirmation payment of their 18 prepetition claim. Berry Good, 400 Bankruptcy Reporter at page 19 746. Nothing in the record is -- there is nothing in the 2.0 record to support adequate protection payments to Ableco on 21 account of its prepetition claim, no showing that its overall 22 collateral condition would be harmed by the use of cash 23 collateral based upon the budget. The proposed budget does not 24 illuminate the overall collateral position of Ableco; it simply 25 shows a potential flow of cash.

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Ableco attempts to correct the issue of this payment in its most recent version of the financing order by stating that if it is later determined that Ableco was not entitled to adequate protection, the payments will be treated as payments on their prepetition claim. This court is aware of no authority that allows a creditor not entitled to adequate protection payments to be paid on its prepetition claim in the absence of a plan, especially while other creditors sit and are paid nothing. The Court in <a href="Berry Good">Berry Good</a> express -- expressly rejected the idea that a post-petition lender could loan money to a debtor for the payment of its prepetition debt.

In addition, as previously noted, the proposed financing arrangement including the use of cash collateral requires the debtor to waive its right to seek use of cash collateral or post-petition lending on any other terms or from any other entity, requires the broad indemnification of the lender, the waiver and surrender of all claims against the lender, the broad remedies of default with respect to Able -- granted to Ableco with respect to third parties such as landlords, the inability of any party to even seek a surcharge of Ableco's collateral, the short-term review period of Ableco's claims, the granting of Ableco -- or to Ableco of the lien on all Chapter 5 claims in this case, the ability of the debtor and the lender to modify the financing arrangement without Court approval, payment of Ableco's expenses without

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Court approval, and the items in the budget previously discussed.

I'm looking at my notes. One item I may have missed in the budget that is in the budget that is not a necessary expense is the \$100,000.00 item for utility deposits based upon the statements of counsel for the debtor yesterday on that motion. None of the utilities are requiring a deposit -- a security deposit. The ruling of the Court is that the financing motion, including the use of cash collateral on the terms proposed therein is not approved. The ruling is without prejudice to further request for approval of financing and/or the use of cash collateral.

Looking at the sales procedure motion, the discussion may be academic given the ruling on the finance motion and statements of debtor's counsel and Ableco's counsel that the finance motion and the sales procedures motion are inextricably intertwined. It would appear that denial of the finance motion effectively operates as a denial of the sale procedures motion. However, it might be -- further review of that motion may be of assistance to the parties and to any party or court that reviews this court's decision.

There are objections to the part -- the objections to the sale procedures motion may be summarized as follows.

Baker Hughes objects that the proposed sale does not allocate purchase price among assets and violates Section 363(f) of the

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Code, as the lien claims of Baker are not expressly assumed under the terms of the sale and Baker does not consent to the sale. Williams and Penn Virginia argue that the proposed sale violates notions of due process, that it is occurring much too quickly, that is is premised on a presumption that Ableco is the first lien holder on every -- of -- with respect to every asset in this case and that the sales procedure does nothing to protect other lien claimants.

The United States Trustee has noted that allowing

Ableco to credit bid its debt is -- debt is problematic when

there are at least nine million dollars and other lien

claimants and a potential lien priority issue and argues that

any credit bid must provide for some form of cash reserves or

procedures to provide for payment of creditors determined to be

superior to Ableco.

U.S. Trustee objects to the breakup fee, argues that the sale process must provide from input from the parties in interest including the creditors and the Unsecured Creditors Committee. The U.S. Trustee objects to the bid protections and expense reimbursement proposal as excessive and inappropriate and argues that this court should grant a reasonable extension of the sale process to allow these questions to be addressed.

The Court notes that under the terms of the proposed agreement once again the sale of assets less -- rests largely within the discretion of Ableco. Under their participation

requirements qualified bidders are defined as those determined to have satisfied the conditions of the bid requirements in the determination of the debtor and its advisors. Is Ableco an advisor for purposes of this section? It's unclear. Under the bid requirements the debtor shall determine whether a bid qualifies as a qualified bid and, again, we have a qualified bidder as one who can provide reasonably satisfactory evidence in the discretion of debtor and its advisors of its financial ability. The identity of the advisors is not limited to exclude representatives of Ableco or the stalking horse.

Both the motion at paragraph 56 in the original proposed order at paragraph 18 conditioned determination of a qualified bidder and qualified bids on the consent of Ableco. That provision was removed in the most recent form of proposed order and assurances were made by counsel for Ableco that that provision never should have been in the original order. Despite those assurances, the Court was and remains at least a bit concerned by the initial presence of these provisions.

In the revised sale order the ability of the stalking horse credit bidder -- or excuse me, the ability of the stalking horse bidder to credit bid is and I quote, "Subject to the rights of the Creditors Committee or any other nondebtor party in interest to assert challenges provided in the Court's final order under 11 U.S.C.," et cetera, "to authorize the debtor to incur indebtedness," et cetera. So in other words,

the ability of the stalking horse bidder to bid is subject to the rights of any creditor to object to the validity of that claim within 45 days. In the eyes of the Court the relief here is ethereal. Even if the Ableco claim is contested, that process cannot be concluded and the validity of the claim determined prior to the date of the sale.

Under the terms of the auction, regardless of outcome of bidding, the rules state that the debtor may adjourn the auction with the consent of Ableco. Furthermore, if the winning bid -- it should be noted that Ableco is not - by the way of credit bid, and I use Ableco and stalking horse bidder interchangeably here because a stalking horse bidder is credit bidding Ableco's debt. If the winning bid is insufficient to cover Ableco's debt, then Ableco has the sole discretion to withhold seeking approval of the sale by the Court. It's found in Docket Number 23-1, the proposed order at page 16.

Furthermore, under Section 6.23(3) at page 53, the debtor-in-possession agreement -- an interesting place to have to find it -- Ableco has the right to terminate the sale process within its sole discretion at any time and for any reason or for no reason at all. Debtor, with the express written consent of Ableco, may modify the bid procedures set out in the order at any time prior to or during the auction without any further notice or Court approval.

If you look at the Court's concerns at some of these

2.0

objections, it does seem to the Court that the sale procedures motion was drafted under the premise that there were no other lien holders claiming a lien upon any of the debtor's assets. The credit bid procedures contain no provisions for dealing with any superior claims. The motion simply states that with respect to any 363(f) issues the debtor will address those at the sale hearing.

The Court is not convinced that an approach that basically says "trust me, I'll deal with this later" is the best approach to any Section 363(f) issues. Given that the proposed sale is a sale in bulk of all of the debtor's assets, these issues are going to exist, whether the sale is to a credit bidder or a cash bidder. The Court is unsure as to why at least some effort to deal with these issues now is not in order.

The Court also finds that the breakup fee is not supported by the evidence presently before the Court. A 1992 decision in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Colorado entitled <u>In the Matter of Twenver</u>, T-W-E-N-V-E-R, <u>Incorporated</u>, 149 Bankruptcy Reporter 954 at page 956, suggest three questions for courts to consider in evaluating breakup fees: Whether the relationship of the parties who negotiated the fee is marked by self-dealing or manipulation; whether the fee hampers rather than encourages bidding; whether the amount of the fee is reasonable in relation to the proposed purchase

price. This court is aware of no case where a breakup fee was awarded to a credit bidder or a creditor of the debtor. If CME is so closely affiliated with Ableco as to be allowed to credit bid its debt, then it is reasonable to treat it as a creditor for bidding purposes.

The record before the Court also does not establish justification for the breakup fee. It's not related to any actual expenses. Ableco wants those as well. There's nothing in the record to indicate that Ableco prepared the data room. That was done by A&M. The Court does not see how on the record the breakup fee encourages bidding in this case. There may be other facts that would support the breakup fee but they are not presently before the Court. The basis for expense reimbursement also seems to be a bit problematic given the fact that none of the fees are subject to anyone's review.

It is therefore the ruling of the Court that the motion -- the sale motion and the motion for bidding procedures is denied without prejudice.

There are other -- there were other matters on yesterday's docket. The application for order approving GMP Securities, LP, the motion for order establishing interim compensation and expense reimbursement procedure, the hearing on those motions as well as -- or -- is continued to Wednesday, June 24, 2009, at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 2, the Federal Building, 224 South Boulder, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

With respect to the critical vendor motion, at this point the debtor has no authorization to use cash collateral or financing. The Court will consider resetting that motion should that financing emerge.

I want to at this point advise the parties -- I did advise you yesterday regarding my schedule. I am out of the office tomorrow and Thursday. I am available Friday afternoon at 3:00. I have a committee meeting that day for the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel that will take most of that day. I anticipate -- I'm fully aware that the effect of this ruling is to send the parties back to the drawing board. I expect -- I will be surprised if there isn't some sort of financing authority requested on a relatively short basis.

If such a request is filed by noon tomorrow, I will see to it that an emergency hearing is set Friday afternoon, and by that I mean Friday, June 12, at 3:00 p.m., here in Tulsa. If that date is not hit, the next time that I am in the State of Oklahoma is on Friday, June 19th. The next hearing dates I have after that are June 24th and 25th and, in fact, some of the Mahalo matters have already been set, as I indicated on the 24th. I simply wanted the parties to be aware of that schedule as they continue their efforts in this matter.

This concludes the ruling of the Court. This hearing is adjourned. Counsel are excused and the Court will stand in recess.

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1	I certify that the foregoing is a court transcript	
2	from an electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the	
3	above-entitled matter.	
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7	Ruth Ann Hager	
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